

## ***2015 Greenspot Backyards Program Overview***

Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District has advised our partners to move from the low-cost rain barrel program to a rain barrel /compost bin/ plant reimbursement program in 2015. The rate that we can purchase rain barrel wholesale from Grief continues to increase while the retail cost of rain barrels is decreasing. Last year was also our third year for offering low cost rain barrels in exchange for stormwater education. Our expansion program is intended to reach additional residents and keep supporters engaged in local conservation efforts. The education program will still include rain barrels, in addition the following components: rain gardens, native plants, composting, and lawn/landscape care.

The switch from low-cost rain barrels has taken some strategy and planning, beginning with nationwide research into other community incentive programs. We believe we have a well thought out strategy that will lead to new participation in municipal stormwater programs.

### ***Partners:***

- Cities and municipalities including: Bexley, Canal Winchester, Columbus, Gahanna, Hilliard, New Albany, Reynoldsburg, Westerville, and Worthington
- Unincorporated Franklin County
- Friends of Alum Creek Tributaries (FACT)
- Friends of Lower Olentangy Watershed (FLOW)
- Grange Insurance Audubon Center
- Solid Waste Authority of Central Ohio (SWACO)

**Website:**

- In April 2015, the program may be accessed at [www.greenspotbackyards.org](http://www.greenspotbackyards.org). The online course and quiz and related resources will be placed here.

**In-person workshops:**

- There are currently 8 in-person workshops scheduled within the City of Columbus, and 1 in-person workshop is scheduled for each participating municipality. These fourteen workshops allow residents multiple opportunities for participation.

**Online workshops:**

- In lieu of attending an in-person workshop, residents may complete an online course and quiz.

**Reimbursement and logistics:**

- The District is adopting a \$50 rebate system. Residents residing in the City of Columbus, unincorporated Franklin County, and Franklin County participating municipalities are eligible.
- The District will no longer be ordering and storing Grief rain barrels at its office but a limited number of leftover barrels are still available for purchase.
- Participants will receive vouchers upon attending free in-person workshops, and certificates for completing the Online Course and Quiz. They are unique to each participant and cannot be duplicated.
- Participants have 60 days from their participation date to submit a voucher/certificate, photo of the assembled items or planted vegetation (may be digital), and a copy of the receipt for purchases not to exceed \$50.
- Reimbursable expenditures include a rain barrel, compost bin, OR plants (includes perennials, shrubs, and trees); only one item is eligible for a refund at this time. The offer is limited to one household/year.

**Timeline**

- The program will begin April 1, 2015, and workshops will continue through fall with future program assessment, including budgetary considerations.

### ***Other Considerations:***

- Only rain barrels with diverters (purchased separately or as part of unit) will be considered for reimbursement.
- We will promote fully-enclosed compost units on our website and in-person workshops. These may include entirely enclosed pre-fabricated bins; pre-fabricated compost bin bottoms (sold separately and reimbursable as part of one \$50 voucher); and open-bottomed compost bins with adequate rodent-proofing as per Columbus Public Health specifications. DIY retrofits (such as sitting bin on paver, using wire mesh, gravel, or hardware cloth), while required to receive reimbursement funds for commonly used open-bottomed bins, will not be considered reimbursable expenses. The District will work closely with Columbus Public Health to abate nuisance issues associated with compost bins. Photos of appropriate bins and associated rodent-abatement measures, as well as copies of receipts, will be required for submittal and reimbursements.
- Reimbursements will not be applied to indoor composting units (vermicomposting or bokashi), homemade bins, or home-composting services such as Compost Columbus.
- Plant reimbursements will not apply to vegetables, annuals, and invasive plants or their cultivars. Residents are strongly encouraged to purchase native plants, but any perennials, shrubs, or trees are reimbursable expenses.
- Rain garden reimbursements, where applicable, are applied separately for eligible residents in participating municipalities and may not be used in conjunction with the expansion program.
- Online resources and staff are available to assist residents in choosing appropriate materials.

### ***Program Contacts***

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